United Nations A/56/684

General Assembly

Distr.: General
6 December 2001

Original: English

Fifty-sixth session
Agenda item 122
Programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001

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Integrated Management Information System project

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the thirteenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) (A/56/602). During its consideration of the report, the Advisory Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General.

2. The report of the Secretary-General describes the activities relating to the IMIS operations of the past 12 months, analyses its present technological conditions and discusses the future developments with the system in place. In order to ensure the ongoing viability of IMIS and to ensure that it would continue to meet the requirements of the Organization, the Secretary-General proposes five specific areas of activity for the modernization of the technical architecture of IMIS. It is proposed to commence this work in January 2002 and to complete it by May 2003. Additional resources required for the ongoing costs associated with the maintenance and technological enhancement of the system would amount to $4,659,000 (see A/56/602, paras. 59-64). Upon request, the Committee was provided with a detailed work programme for the proposed technological updates of the system (see the annex to the present report). **The Committee has no objection to the proposal.**

3. In addition, as indicated in paragraph 54 and table 1 of document A/56/602, the amount of $975,000 is requested over the provision of $77.6 million approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 53/219 of 7 April 1999 for the development of IMIS. The additional requirements of $975,000 relate to a need for extensive data clean-up work and verification for implementation of the Payroll module in offices away from Headquarters, which was not fully anticipated. Thus, the revised and final total costs for the development and implementation of the IMIS project would amount to $78,554,600 from its inception in 1989. The main areas covered by the system include personnel management, post management, accounting, procurement, travel, payroll and budget execution, in line with the

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purpose of the system, as approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 43/217 of 21 December 1988, which is to process and report on administrative actions at all major duty stations (see A/56/602, para. 1).

4. The Advisory Committee notes that the total additional requirements requested by the Secretary-General, as indicated in paragraphs 2 and 3 above, amount to $5,634,700. It is proposed to finance these requirements from the current available investment income reported under the special account for IMIS, which amounts to $5,956,000 as at 30 June 2001 (see A/56/602, paras. 64-66).

5. The main IMIS activities since the last progress report are discussed in detail in chapter II, sections B to F, and summarized in paragraphs 37-40 of document A/56/602. These include activities to assist offices away from Headquarters in implementation of the system locally and related issues of training and support. The system is currently installed either totally or partially at Headquarters and major duty stations (namely Addis Ababa, Bangkok, Beirut, Geneva, Nairobi, Santiago and Vienna). It is also being used by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), and the human resources module is used by the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO (ITC) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (see A/56/602, para. 2).

6. The Advisory Committee notes from the summary of the report that, "following the completion of the development phase of IMIS as initially planned and the implementation of the payroll module at Headquarters in September 2000, the payroll system has been successfully implemented in the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and in the United Nations Office at Vienna. Preparations for its implementation are well advanced in the other offices away from Headquarters. UNDP and UNICEF are also currently preparing to implement the payroll functionality. With the implementation of the finance functionality now complete in all major duty stations, usage of the system has continued to increase" (see also A/56/602, paras. 22-28). The Committee was informed that, at present, there are over 4,500 registered users (see also A/56/602, annex II).

7. The Advisory Committee recalls that the Secretary-General intended to report on lessons learned in the context of the thirteenth progress report on IMIS (see A/55/7/Add.8, para. 7). In this connection, the Committee was informed that a final and comprehensive report on IMIS was to be issued shortly, as an addendum to document A/56/602, which would include a discussion on lessons learned from the development and implementation of the system. **The Advisory Committee requests that, after that final report, information on maintenance and future enhancements to the system be provided in the context of the proposed programme budget, under the corresponding section of the budget, including information on further progress made with regard to integration of IMIS with other programme budgeting and reporting systems being developed by the Secretariat.**

8. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 36 of document A/56/602 that, during the reporting period, within the framework of the Task Force on Common Services, discussions continued on the establishment of IMIS as a common service for the United Nations funds and programmes. Maintenance services for IMIS

applications installed or to be installed in the future as well as technical help desks and consulting services for United Nations funds and programmes will continue to be provided on a cost-recovery basis. The Advisory Committee is aware, from the exchange of information with representatives of funds and programmes during its review of their administrative support budgets, of shortcomings and technological obsolescence in IMIS that have rendered the system unattractive for programme applications by funds and programmes. **As indicated in paragraph 12 below, the Committee requests that this issue be addressed as a matter of priority.**

9. The Advisory Committee notes the information provided in paragraphs 41 to 47 of document A/56/602 on the implementation of IMIS in peacekeeping operations and the International Tribunals. With regard to peacekeeping operations, the first phase of the analysis has been focused on the technical platform and remote accessibility. A series of tests of remote access have been carried out. It is apparent from this phase of analysis that the telecommunications infrastructure would require enhancing in most locations in order to provide satisfactory performance of the remote access to IMIS by the peacekeeping missions (see A/56/602, para. 44).

10. On the basis of the results of tests of remote access, the Advisory Committee notes that the Secretariat proposes to proceed with the implementation of IMIS in peacekeeping operations on a phased approach basis. The first phase of the implementation is targeted for completion in early 2002 and will consist of a link between IMIS at Headquarters and three peacekeeping field locations (namely the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) and the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi). For these missions, the communications infrastructure required is already in place and is considered sufficiently reliable to support remote access (see A/56/602, para. 45).

11. With regard to the International Tribunals, the Advisory Committee notes that, with the full implementation of the payroll module, the payroll for the international staff of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda is now operated through IMIS and that installation of a local IMIS system at that Tribunal is not possible owing to technical difficulties. **As regards the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, the Committee notes with concern that there has been no identifiable progress on the issue during 2001.**

12. **The Advisory Committee regrets the limited progress achieved so far in the implementation of IMIS in peacekeeping operations and the International Tribunals. The Committee recommends that the Secretary-General submit a report on the strategy for deployment of IMIS to peacekeeping operations and the Tribunals to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session. The report should also address the issue of required enhancements to the system to make it viable for possible programme applications by United Nations funds and programmes.**

13. **Furthermore, the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly approve an additional provision of $5,634,700 under the Integrated Management Information System Fund to meet the requirements of IMIS associated with activities detailed in chapter V of the report of the Secretary-General, to be financed from the investment income reported under the Fund at 30 June 2001.**

Annex

Detailed information on the breakdown of resource requirements and the work programme for projects A to E, under A/56/602, table 2

A. Re-engineering of the user interface with the ability to deploy the system on the Web:

(i) General temporary assistance: three staff at the P-4 level, three staff at the P-3 level (84 work-months in total);

(ii) Contractual services: based on a proposal from the software vendor, the project will require a team of up to 10 contractor staff. Initially, preparatory work will involve a reduced team of three contractor staff, building up to the full complement over a period of two to three months. The vendor's proposal is based on a detailed review of the IMIS user sessions and of the experience gained during the Web migration of two user sessions earlier in 2001. Out of the total 1,086 screens in the system, grouped in 251 categories and user sessions, it is proposed to re-engineer approximately 60 per cent of the screens. The remaining 40 per cent of the screens comprising reference table maintenance, administration, batch function and certain other categories of screens will be migrated to the Web without re-engineering;

(iii) Work programme: the short-term staff will comprise three IMIS development teams supplemented by resource persons from the user departments. That staff will work with the contractors, assisting them with IMIS-specific features of the software and learning specific Web features of the development. The resource persons will be focal points to provide requirements for re-engineering the screens and testing them after migration and re-engineering in Web format.

B. Re-writing of entitlements/posting applications in modern programming language:

(i) General temporary assistance: two staff at the P-3 level (28 work-months);

(ii) Contractual services: the services of a contractor are required with respect to expertise in the area of large administrative systems reprogramming in the modern languages;

(iii) Work programme: given the specialized nature of the work, a team will be organized comprising two short-term United Nations staff members with knowledge of the system and one representative of a contractor who would be an expert in the chosen programming language and would have knowledge of the existing language. The current underlying business logic of the entitlements and posting application will not be changed. Upon completion of the re-writing, users will carry out regression testing to ensure the correct functioning of the application in the new language.

C. Study of functional and technical needs for consolidation of the system:

(i) General temporary assistance: one staff at the P-4 level, two staff at the P-3 level (42 work-months in total);

(ii) Contractual services: specialized knowledge of a database consolidation technology and of available solutions will be required, which the United Nations does not have at present;

(iii) Work programme: the work programme will include technical and functional aspects. One United Nations staff member will work primarily with the contractor on the technical issues to identify and recommend the technical architecture best adapted to IMIS. The other two short-term staff members will focus on functional issues, business processes and information flows between duty stations, procedures and policy matters, and reporting requirements. The team will also identify changes to the database structure that may be needed to support modified business processes, information flows, reporting and other requirements. While the precise extent of those changes cannot be determined prior to the study, it is expected that those changes could be met within existing maintenance resources, although the need for further resources cannot be entirely excluded.

D. Re-engineering of the system for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week operations:

(i) General temporary assistance: three staff at the P-3 level (42 work-months in total);

(ii) Work programme: the work in this area concerns those processes that run off-line in a batch mode. Currently, the database cannot be made available to online users while those processes are running because of contention when the actions update the same records or the same database tables which are in use. These processes must be modified in order to allow concurrent updates by online actions. The processes concerned are grouped into several categories: human resources, finance, payroll, time and attendance and interfaces. Each category must be reviewed and applicable changes made to remove contention with the online processes. The basic logic of the processes will remain the same, but with the changes described above and regression testing will need to be conducted by users.

E. Study on the reporting application update in the context of deploying the system on the Web:

(i) General temporary assistance: two staff at the P-3 level (28 work-months);

(ii) Work programme: the short-term staff, having experience with reporting applications for large database systems, will work alongside an IMIS staff member knowledgeable in the reporting applications. They will research and identify a front-end reporting tool to replace the existing one that is not suitable for deployment of the application on the Web. It is expected that work

on the re-engineering of the reports adapted to the selected replacement tool can also be initiated from within these resources. However, the scope of the total requirements for deploying IMIS on the Web in the context of this project will be determined upon completion of the study.